
General School Policy, Practices and Procedures and School Activities

SCOIL MUIRE, CLONDRA, CO LONGFORD



1. THE SCHOOL DAY

- (1.) **School door opens at 9.10a.m.** 9.10a.m.-9.30a.m. is assembly time. Formal school begins at 9.30a.m. School finishes at 2.50p.m. For Junior and Senior Infants school ends at 1.50p.m. Formal school work begins at 9.30a.m. Every encouragement should be given to pupils to attend regularly and punctually. The Board of Management is **not responsible** for pupils arriving before 9.10a.m. and staying on after 2.50p.m. Even if a teacher is on the premises the door will not be opened to pupils until 9.10a.m. for insurance purposes. **Infants finish at 1.50p.m. and it is parents responsibility to be there on time. In the interest of safety please collect your child at school gate/door.** If, on the rare occasion you cannot arrange to have your infant child collected, you must ask to keep your child in the classroom. This request may be facilitated by the teacher, if it doesn't impinge on classwork for the afternoon.

School Breaks

11.00a.m.–11.10a.m. and 12.30p.m–1.00p.m.

Children may eat their lunch in the classroom. After eating, children are not allowed to remain in classrooms during lunch break as there is no supervision while teachers are on their lunch breaks. Children are encouraged to bring and eat a healthy lunch and snacks. See Section 3, below.

(2.) **Security**

Please enter and exit through the main entrance at all times. The front door is locked on a safety lock. In the event of a fire all personnel are able to exit the building using the fire doors. If you need to take your child out of class during the school day, please ring the doorbell. The person who answers the door will bring your child to you. Please let us know the reason you are removing your child from school and we will record it on the Aladdin system. In the interest of safety we will be keeping all other entrances to the school closed, so please remember to leave by the main door. Visitors to the school are asked to sign our Visitors' Book when arriving and leaving.

When a pupil has to leave school early or be absent from school for part of the day a **written note** or a message via Aladdin must be forwarded to the school. A written note or message via Aladdin is also necessary if **anyone other than a parent is calling to collect them or if they are cycling or walking home.** The school must be informed if any particular individual is **not** allowed to collect a pupil. This is to ensure as far as possible the safety of the pupils during school hours. Please try to keep these absences to a minimum.

(3.) **Traffic Control**

Parents are not allowed park outside the school premises. The entrance to the school must be kept clear at all times. "Drop and go" to the best of your ability. There is parking at canal adjacent to the school and parents are also encouraged to park in village and walk children down to school. Pupils are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school.

(4.) Pupil illness during school hours

Where a pupil becomes ill during school hours you will be contacted and asked to collect your child. If you are not available the contact numbers on your child's file will be called and they will be asked to collect your child. **For this reason it is very important that the school is informed of any changes in telephone or mobile numbers.**

(5.) Emergency Closures

In the event of an emergency closure, e.g. no heat, no electricity, no water, etc., parents/guardians/or those people nominated by parents to collect their children will be contacted by phone/text and an explanation for closure will be given. Time for collection of children will be arranged. A teacher will remain on the premises until all pupils are collected. **Please inform us of any change in mobile phone numbers during the school year.**

(6.) Pupil Absences

Under the Education Welfare Act which became law on 5th July 2002 it is the legal obligation on all schools to inform the Tusla (formerly National Educational Welfare Board) if your child is absent for a total of 20 days at any time during the school year. **Each day that your child is absent is counted, whether single days or multiple days. Once 20 days is reached Tusla must be informed.** This is a legal obligation on all schools and the Welfare Board must be informed even if a child is absent due to illness.

A written note or a message on Aladdin must be supplied for each day/days a child is absent from school explaining reasons for the child's absence. If a child leaves the school early or arrives late, this is recorded on the Aladdin (online school management) system.

(7.) WhatsApp

We use a combination of Aladdin and WhatsApp to communicate with parents. Information such as upcoming events/closures/or that a note/letter has been sent home with their children is communicated in this way. It is essential that we be informed of any change in telephone number in order that you can continue to receive messages.

(8.) Yard Duty And Supervision

During break times children are supervised at all times, responsibility being shared by the teachers. A rota is drawn up at the start of the school year. Some supervision duties are part of the extra duties for the post of responsibility holder in our school.

2. CLASS ALLOCATION

This year (2025-26) the division of classes is as follows.

Junior and Senior Infants

1st and 2nd Classes

3rd and 4th Classes

5th and 6th Classes

This division will be reviewed annually and changed as appropriate. If numbers are large in any classroom, the class allocation may vary in the interests of all children involved and to avoid overload or stress on a teacher.

3. CALLING TO THE SCHOOL

Co-operation between the parents and teachers is essential for the child's development. The teachers and Board of Management have always found that the parents in this school co-operate fully in every aspect of school life and this is greatly appreciated.

The school phone number is 043-3326417; the e-mail address is scoilmhuireclondrans@gmail.com and our website address is clondrans.com. Our secretary will pass on a message if a parent needs to make contact with a pupil. Parents can also communicate with the school via Aladdin or WhatsApp.

You are welcome to the school to discuss any aspect of your child's education. **As the school day is very busy you must ring in advance to make an appointment with the teacher concerned to find a mutually acceptable time. You will be asked to provide an outline of the matter you wish to discuss in order that the teacher can adequately prepare for the meeting.**

4. PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once annually, usually in the first term. The class teacher and Special Education teacher will normally attend this meeting. Each family will be allocated a time for your child/children.

The purpose of the parent/teacher meeting is to allow a general discussion on your child's progress at school. As time for annual parent/teacher meetings is limited, specific concerns should be raised with the class teacher through an informal parent/teacher meeting at another time. Informal parent/teacher meetings are arranged by appointment, either by the teacher or parent, at a mutually agreed time.

5. STAFF MEETINGS

There will be one staff meeting per term. We hold staff meetings in order to foster collaborative decision-making. Members of staff should be willing to make constructive contributions to listen to each other's viewpoints, ~~to be prepared~~ to be flexible and to compromise if necessary and to uphold the majority decision. The person chairing staff meetings should encourage such open and constructive discussions. Staff meetings will be held in order to develop or change aspects of ~~the School Plan~~ our General School Policy and to discuss school-related policies and problems. These meetings help to engender a sense of collective team commitment and to explore areas in the curriculum which might need attention and other aspects of the management of the school.

6. SCHOOL CALANDAR

The DES have now standardised the school year with each primary school having the same holidays, i.e. Hallowe'en, Christmas, Spring Mid-term and Easter. There are a few closures that are at the discretion of the school. Near the end of the school year, the School Calendar for the next year is sent to parents along with Report Cards and other information. It is also published on the school website.

We are unable to inform the parents of the In-service Curriculum days until they have been decided upon, but as soon as we are made aware of the dates, we will inform the parents by text.

Taking into consideration Section 21(9) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised

by the Principal. Therefore, the school cannot give 'permission' for holiday absences during term time. We discourage parents from organising holidays during term time and ask parents that children are not removed during the last two weeks of May and first week of June, which is when we schedule standardised testing.

Teachers are not expected to organise separate work for children going on holidays.

7. ROLL BOOK

We now use the Aladdin School Management system and the Rolla is called each morning by each class teacher.

8. VISITORS – Sales representatives, etc.

In order to avoid disruption of class, the secretary, if possible, will open the door and take a brief outline of what the person wants. The principal will then talk to the visitor if appropriate. Visitors to the school are asked to sign our Visitors' Book when arriving and leaving.

- We have a number of sales representatives with school material who we deal with each year.
- The Folens/Fallons/Edco representative and other representatives from publishers/educational suppliers usually call annually.
- A company with sanitary products calls approximately once a term.
- A First Aid supplier calls a number of times during the year.

9. TRAVELLING IN STAFF CARS

Where possible, teachers or other members of staff will not carry children in their cars. Parents or their nominees will be asked to bring the child home if they are sick, etc. If this is not possible a staff member may be asked to bring the child home. If such an emergency or a situation arises, staff must not bring one child on their own in their cars at any time. The staff member must bring three children in order not to have one child alone in their car at any time. See Child Protection Policy.

10. USE OF COMMON AREAS IN BUILDINGS/GROUNDS

Staff collaboratively decide on the use of common areas, e.g. GP room/yard, etc., each year. The Special Education teachers' timetables will be taken into account to facilitate all children benefiting from the activities.

GP Room:

- When using the GP room children must play within the defined designated area.
- All windows must be closed and lights turned off before leaving the GP room.
- All equipment to be returned to GP store and left in its designated area.
- Lock the GP store door.

11. USE OF SHARED EQUIPMENT

There is verbal communication between teachers on the use of all shared equipment, e.g. maths/music/science, etc. A timetable will be drawn up for shared use of computers/iPads/Chromebooks.

12. PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Our Parents' Association was formed in 2012 and has become an enormous asset to the school community. As well as vital fundraising activities, the Parents' Association fulfils an important role in supporting the school through reviewing and commenting on school policies, suggesting activities and supporting and inviting suggestions from parents in the school. Over the past few years, the Parent's Association have organised many events which may include:

- Car boot sale/s
- Table Quiz
- Race Night
- Annual Hallowe'en competitions
- Santy visit and Grotto
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Organising sponsorship prizes for our annual raffle.

Through their fundraising efforts the Parent's Association have also contributed financially to the purchasing of school equipment and materials. They have subsidised the cost of school tour buses and contributed towards the cost of our eight-week swimming programme.

The Parents' Association have also assisted us with our Christmas concert and Raffle and are always at hand when called on to provide support for school-run events. Their help and support is invaluable and greatly enhances the school community.

13. FUNDRAISING

Usually

- A Christmas concert is held annually.
- A draw is held annually at Christmas and, occasionally, if funds are low, also at summer. Lines are sold for this draw.
- Occasionally other fundraising efforts, e.g. jumble sale, are organised

Parents, Parents' Association and Board of Management members help with all these fundraising activities.

14. HEALTH & HYGIENE

1. Any contagious illness should be notified to the school immediately and your child should return to school only when fully recovered. You should contact the school as soon as possible. All parents will be notified of the illness in question. The confidentiality of the parent reporting an issue is assured.
2. Your child is sharing a room daily with a large number of children. Close contact with other children is unavoidable, so particular attention should be paid to health and hygiene.

Head Lice

Head lice are a common problem in primary schools. As your child shares a classroom and playground daily with a large number of other children, it is very easy for head lice to spread. Unfortunately head

lice are extremely mobile and infectious and can pass from one individual to another by head to head contact.

You should check your child's hair regularly for head lice – if your child has contracted lice **you should inform the teacher or principal and treat the hair immediately**. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence. A text will be sent out each family informing them that there has been an outbreak of head lice in the school. **No names will be given.** Everybody, including you, other members of the family and school friends, who have been in contact with your infected child should be checked for lice infections.

Head lice are very easy to treat – lotion or shampoo treatments can be bought from pharmacies without prescription.

- 3 **Children who are sick** should not be sent to school. You must consider the other children in the class. If a child is fit to attend school they must be out at break time.
- 4 The HSE offers a medical screening for children at least once during primary school years. This includes screening for vision, hearing, general health and nutrition. In some HSE areas children are also screened for behavioural and emotional problems. Where problems exist they are discussed with parents and teachers.
- 5 Each year, the HSE ask for the names and addresses of children in our school. This is to facilitate the school nurse and school doctor, who visit the school annually and carry out vision tests, hearing tests, immunisation, etc. You will receive forms requesting your permission which you return to your child's class teacher. The HSE dentist may send an appointment for you to attend the clinic. You may also contact Longford Health Centre for an appointment once your child starts school.

If your child has *a particular health problem* such as allergies, asthma, diabetes etc. – you should advise the school. The school should be made aware of the name and address of your family doctor. If your child needs drugs on a regular basis you may need to make special arrangements for this.

15. HEALTHY LUNCHES

We encourage you to send your child to school each day with a healthy and nutritious lunch. We wish to emphasise our School Health Eating Policy: all **fizzy drinks, sweets, crisps, biscuits, cake, buns including cereal bars** are **not allowed** in children's lunchboxes. Our healthy lunches policy outlines acceptable and unacceptable food. The only exception to this rule is the **last Friday of each month** when children are allowed to bring in two **small** 'treats'. Pupils will be allowed to eat their lunch in the classroom in an effort to get pupils to eat their lunch. The teachers encourage the pupils to eat their lunch but it is ultimately the child's own responsibility. **For pupil safety, do not put drinks in a glass bottle or bottles without a flip lid.**

16. UNIFORMS

The Parents' Association brought in a uniform in September 1999. In January 2016 the Parents' Association suggested to the Board of Management that the uniform be made mandatory for all pupils. The Board accepted this proposal and from September 2016 all children will be expected to wear school uniforms. In 2024, our uniform was redesigned and updated. The uniform now consists of a navy crested top and navy track suit bottoms or trousers and white tee-shirt/polo shirt. Navy crested shorts and white t-shirts may be worn in summer. The girls may wear a navy pinafore or skirt and if they wish. From the 2025-26 school year, a school jersey will also be available.

17. PERSONAL PROPERTY

1. The school cannot be responsible for the loss of students' property. All books, lunch-boxes, jackets, coats, erasers, pencils, copies etc., should be clearly marked with the pupil's name.
2. Valuables should not be brought to school.
3. **Money should not be brought to school unless it is specifically required for school purposes - it should never be left in the cloakroom.**

We strongly advise parents not to allow your child to wear jewellery to school. Ear studs only are acceptable and perhaps a watch. This is all in the interest of safety for your child at playtime, during PE and Games. Children wearing earrings which teachers deem unsafe will be requested to remove same or refrain from playtime, PE or Games.

18. BANNED ITEMS

1. No chewing gum, glass bottles, Tipp-ex or correction fluid, aerosols, cigarettes, vapes, matches or other dangerous items are allowed in pupil's possession on the school premises.
2. **Fireworks** are banned due to the fact that pupils could be seriously injured. Parents of any pupil who brings fireworks to school will be contacted to bring their child home.
3. **Mobile Phones, tablets, smart watch/fitbit or any device with internet connection** are not allowed in school. If a child is found to have any of these devices it will be taken up and left in the main office until it is collected by a parent/guardian. On very rare occasions, pupils from the senior room are allowed phones, etc. on the last day of term with the permission and under the supervision of their class teacher. Please read our Mobile Phone, Electronic Devices and Electronic Games Policy. If a child needs a phone for medical reasons, this will be discussed with the Principal and approval sought from the Board of Management.
4. Pupils should **not bring in toys, computer games**, etc., as they disrupt school work - unless asked to do so. Exception: Books.
5. Make-up and tanning products are not allowed in school.
6. Please read our Substance Use policy.

19. ACCIDENTS

All parents will be aware that even the most closely supervised children will have accidents occasionally. This is true of both home and school. If your child has an accident at school the teachers will respond in a caring and professional manner. Boards of Management and teachers often feel that parents have been misled on the issue of compensation for accidental injuries. There is no automatic entitlement to compensation for accidents in the school any more than there is for accidents in the home or elsewhere.

PROCEDURES:

- 1 Teacher in Charge to be informed about any accident which occurs.
- 2 Teacher in Charge will assess the severity of the accident, to the best of his/her ability.

IN THE CASE OF MINOR ACCIDENTS:

- Where deemed appropriate First Aid may be administered (as decided by staff, and as determined by contents of First Aid kit).
- Teacher on yard duty will record Accident and procedures adopted in the Yard Incident Book.

IN THE CASE OF MORE SERIOUS ACCIDENTS:

e.g.

- Broken bones/fractures
- Bang to head
- Deep lacerations
- Bleeding
- Eye injuries etc., etc.

The procedures to be followed (not necessary in the following order)

- Teacher on yard duty will send another student for another member of staff
- Teacher will assess the severity of accident to best of his/her ability
- Where appropriate First Aid maybe administered as decided by staff and determined by content of First Aid Kit
- Parent or other named person will be contacted.
- Nearest Doctor **may** be contacted.
- Student **may** be sent to Accident and Emergency or teacher may ring an ambulance.
- Serious accidents will be documented in detail in the Yard Incident Book. This account may be used to complete the appropriate insurance form in the event of a parent instigating an insurance claim.
- B.O.M. will be informed of serious accidents resulting in insurance claims.

Every effort will be made by us to make contact first with the parent but this may be impossible when an accident occurs. We will follow appropriate procedures i.e., call a doctor/ambulance. If parents wish to name their own doctor we may try him/her first but if we fail to make contact we may send pupil to the first available doctor.

Our school enrolment form requests parents to inform us if their child/children has any allergies. A record of these will be kept on file. For those children with specific medical needs an Individual Administration of Medicines Policy must be completed by the parents and Board of Management (see 20, below). An outline of procedures to follow will be posted in the staff room.

20. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

Procedures:

It is recommended that:

Any pupil who has a contagious infection or is in need of receipt of medication during school hours, on a short-term basis, may find that home is a more suitable environment than school during recuperation.

As a general rule, teachers will not be involved in the administration of medication to pupils. No staff member (teacher, SNA etc.) can be required to administer medicine or drugs to a pupil.

No pupil may have medicines on the school premises, or use same. Any pupil needing medication or possibly needing medication on school premises must inform the Board of Management in writing. An Administration of Medicine Agreement must be drawn up signed between the Board of Management and the parents. This Agreement will be given to class teacher and displayed discreetly in the staffroom.

In exceptional circumstances, where a teacher/designated person agrees to become involved in the administration of medication, it should be noted any teacher who is willing to administer medicines should only do so under strictly controlled guidelines, fully confident that the administration will be safe and under the authorisation of the Board of Management. It is wise to limit this willingness to emergency situations only. A teacher who does take responsibility for administering medicines takes on a heavy legal duty of care to discharge the responsibilities correctly. Every reasonable precaution must be taken. **Clear written instructions about medicines requiring regular administration or occasional administration must be obtained and strictly followed.**

The procedure to be followed is that:-

1. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil concerned should write to the Board of Management requesting the Board to authorise a teacher/teachers, or other designated person to administer the medication, on the school premises.
2. The request should also contain written instructions of the procedure to be followed in administering the medication, and the circumstances under which it is necessary to do so.
3. The Board of Management, having considered the matter, may authorise the teacher/designated person to administer medication to a pupil. If the teacher/designated person is so authorised he/she should be properly instructed by the Board of Management.
4. A teacher/designated person will not administer medication without the specific instructions of the Board of Management.
5. In administering medication to pupils, teachers/designated person will exercise the standard of care of a responsible parent.
6. The Board of Management will inform the school's insurers accordingly.
7. The Board of Management will seek an indemnity from the parent/guardian in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of medication (form from CPMSA Handbook to be completed, available from Principal).
8. The Board of Management will organise storage of medicine for each individual pupil. It will be arranged according to individual requirements, taking into account the age and needs of the child concerned, the level of access required, personnel involved, and circumstances guiding the use of the medication.
9. Where the above procedure is put in place the Board of Management will give consideration to authorising another member of staff to administer the medication in the event that the regular teacher is absent from school.
10. Storage of medication and responsibility of parents re supply and supervision of medications will be determined on an individual basis.

It is the parents and child's responsibility to have medication/nutritional needs/equipment, etc. in the child's possession when they are going on all school activities outside the school premises, e.g. swimming, tours, sports blitz, etc.

Arrangements should also be made for the safe storage of medication and procedures for the administration of medication in the event of the authorised teachers' absence. It is the parents' responsibility to check each morning whether or not the authorised teacher is in school unless an alternative arrangement is made locally.

In emergencies teachers should do no more than is obviously necessary and appropriate to relieve extreme distress or prevent further and otherwise irreparable harm. Qualified medical treatment will be secured in emergencies at the earliest opportunity in so far as is possible.

Where possible schools should request that medical practitioners would arrange times for medication so that they don't coincide with school times.

Teachers should be made aware in writing of any medical condition suffered by any children in their class. Children who have epilepsy or diabetes or who are prone to anaphylactic shock syndrome may have an attack at any time and it is vital, therefore, to identify the symptoms in order that treatment can be given by an appropriate person as necessary.

Where teachers have been given medication to administer in cases of emergency e.g. adrenaline in case of anaphylaxis, this medication should be the smallest dose possible to ensure recovery until a medical expert can take over. At no time should an emergency dose be such that it could harm the child if inappropriately administered. Confirmation of this should be obtained in writing from the medical practitioner responsible for the child before a school would agree to hold such life-saving medication in its care. Where possible, injection needles should not be held on the premises and epipen type injections should be used.

Where children are suffering from life-threatening conditions such as the above, parents should outline clearly in writing and complete the indemnity form from the Board of Management, stating what can and can't be done in a particular emergency situation, with particular reference to what may be a risk to the child.

21. CURRICULUM

In accordance with the curriculum for primary schools, Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, endeavours to provide a broad general education, emphasising high academic standards combined with a wide range of experiences which will develop the whole child to achieve his/her full potential and prepare him/her for the demands of further education and the rapidly changing society in which we now live. The curriculum includes: English, Irish, Mathematics, Religious Education, Arts (Music, Drama and Visual Arts), PE, Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) i.e. History, Geography and Science and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

Digital Learning

We are very committed to the continuing development of our Digital Learning programme. Our classrooms are equipped with Interactive Touch-screen monitors and we have a number of laptops for teachers and pupils. We also have a bank of iPads and Chromebooks. Every classroom is connected to the Internet with Broadband access. We are continually striving to update our hardware and software resources. We have developed a policy on Digital Learning which has been ratified by the Board of Management. We have also developed an Acceptable Internet Use Policy which is distributed to the parents of children in First Class. All parents are expected to familiarise themselves and their children with this policy and sign a 'Responsible Use of the Internet Undertaking'.

Gaeilge Activities

We strive to celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge in March every year and encourage participation in our Irish language and culture.

PM Readers

In the 2024-25 we introduced PM readers as a school/home shared reading scheme for parents and children. The aims for this scheme are to:

- improve the literacy skills and sight vocabulary of each child
- encourage a love of reading
- allow the children access to as wide a range of book/stories as possible

We hope that parents and children will enjoy talking about the books together and that they will have fun reading them together.

Religious Education

Religious Education is part of the school curriculum. We prepare children for the Sacraments – First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation. First Communions are usually in May and Confirmation is every second year for 5th & 6th class.

Special Education

In September 2017 Scoil Mhuire, Clondra was allocated 1 full-time Special Education Teacher and is the base school for a shared post with Naomh Earnán Killashee (12.5 hours each). The present allocation was granted by the Department of Education in 2019 and reviewed annually.

The Special Education Teachers set up Learning Support/Resource Programmes in conjunction with Class Teachers and Parents and monitor the success of these programmes. The Special Education Teachers work with children who have learning difficulties or a disability and, where time permits, will work with gifted children. Our Special Education Teachers may also help the Class Teachers to implement class-based programmes. The role of the Special Education Teacher may also involve helping children who have a particular difficulty with a topic or supporting children who may have missed out on a curricular area through illness or bereavement. This support is normally carried out informally in the classroom setting or in the Special Education Room and parents are not contacted. If a parent has any objection to this, the school must be informed in writing.

22. HOMEWORK

It is this school's policy that some type of homework is given each night on a time graded basis - no overloading. We see homework as a continuation of lesson or lessons taught during the day. It is also an opportunity to explore new areas e.g. projects. Homework will not be given at weekends.

Pupils are expected to complete homework which may be oral, written or memorisation. Homework is an important part of the child's learning. It links the home and school and can be a means of self-discipline and good study habits for the pupil. Parents are strongly encouraged to take an active interest in their child's homework. A special emphasis is placed on nightly spellings and tables. Parents expect homework to be given and it is also a good way for them to be involved in the child's education. It gets the child into the habit of home studying which will increase greatly when they move to secondary school.

If homework causes stress or worry to the child, parents are asked to talk to the teacher. If for an acceptable reason homework cannot be completed on a particular night, parents are asked to send a **signed note**. We encourage parents to take an active part in their child's religious programme and say the prayers with them.

The following is a guideline as to the amount of time each class is expected to spend at homework each night.

- Junior Infants 10/15 minutes
- Senior Infants 15/20 minutes
- 1st & 2nd Class 30 minutes
- 3rd & 4th Class 45 minutes approx.
- 5th & 6th Class 1 hour approx.

23. ASSESSMENT

1st-3rd class - Spelling, Tables and Maths are tested on a continuous basis in these classes.

4th -6th class - Spellings, Tables, Maths, English, Irish, History and Geography are tested regularly in these classes.

A variety of standardised tests may be used throughout the school, e.g.

- Drumcondra Primary Reading Tests – [given to 1st-6th class in May each year]
- SigmaT Mathematics Tests [given to 1st-6th class at end May/June each year]
- MIST
- Quest
- Ability test, e.g.,
NRIT
NefrNelson non-verbal Reasoning Test

Teachers also use general class and pupil observation sheets in assessing progress of each pupil. In this way the teacher can use his/her assessment, plan the curriculum so as to be relevant to each pupil. Please see Assessment Policy.

24. SCHOOL BAGS

We are very conscious of this issue in Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, and will do our best to ensure the children only take home the books they need for homework. However, we do notice that the bags can be full of unnecessary materials from time to time, therefore we ask that you would get your child to clean out the bag thoroughly every week.

25. TEXTBOOK SELECTION/BOOKLISTS

Teachers discuss textbook selection with each other and draw up a book list annually. Books are picked on the grounds of suitability for class group/continuity for each class/book series in use in school. From the school year 2023-24, the Department of Education fund schools to purchase school text books, workbooks, copies and, if funding allows, ancillary materials for all pupils in the school. Our Book Rental Scheme has been superseded by this Scheme.

Schemes of Work for each subject are decided by all teachers. The various schemes available will all be examined and the most relevant scheme for our school will be picked.

26. REDUCE/RECYCLING

In order to educate the children in recycling and as part of the effort to receive our first green flag and to minimise the cost of disposing the rubbish, we make every effort here to 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle'. We have recycling bins in each class which we encourage children to use. We ask the children to take home their unused lunches. This all forms part of our Green Schools Flag status.

In the 2024-25 school year we have made a Re-turn bin available to parents and pupils to recycle plastic bottles and cans under the Re-turn Scheme.

27. “CHILDREN FIRST” – NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

The Department of Education and Science have in place Guidelines and procedures for all schools in relation to Child Protection and Welfare. These guidelines promote the welfare of all children and are to be welcomed. SPHE (Social, Physical and Health Education) is part of the curriculum for all pupils and this includes a section on safety and protection.

- S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) is now an integral part of the Primary School Curriculum. The Stay Safe Programme, Relationship and Sexuality (R.S.E.) and Walk Tall programme are resources we use to teach this S.P.H.E. Programme.
- Stay Safe deals with specific areas of abuse, feeling safe/unsafe, bullying, touches, secrets and telling and strangers.
- R.S.E. deals with relationships and sexuality.
- Walk Tall deals with drug prevention and abuse.
- ‘Friends for Life’ or ‘Lust for Life’ programme may be conducted every second/third year.

In SPHE and R.S.E. parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school works in a supportive role.

An outline of the lessons/sensitive issues will be available on request to parents, so that they can prepare the child before it is dealt with in school, if they so wish. A parents’ right to withdraw pupils from the process will be honoured. The parents will inform the school in writing of this decision. However if a child is withdrawn for the teaching of sensitive issues we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell/inform him/her about what happened.

List of possible sensitive issues available from school office on request.

R.S.E. & SPHE policies are available for viewing in Principal’s Office.

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Clondra has adopted these guidelines as school policy. Consequently if there is a matter of concern in relation to abuse of children we are obliged to report this to Tusla and to the HSE and Gardaí if necessary. They will assess the case and provide the necessary support for the child concerned.

28. STARTING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Each year we invite the new Junior Infants and their parents into the school for an afternoon in May/June. A meeting with the parents takes place explaining what their child will be doing during the year and also a short resume of what is covered in each subject and ‘little’ ideas which might help to make life easier for their child (eg. Velcro shoes, schoolbags big enough to take their workbooks, all clothes marked with their child’s name etc.). The children go into the classroom and become familiar with the layout and the different games/books etc that are available in the classroom. The parents are given an information booklet explaining how to prepare their child for school.

29. TRANSITION TO SECOND LEVEL

We will endeavour to facilitate and smooth transition to secondary level for pupils. We use the NCCA 6th Class Education Passport and when we receive notification that a child is enrolled in a particular secondary school we forward this and all appropriate records (where Educational Assessments are being sent parents will be notified) to said secondary school. Where a child has SNA or resource hours this information may be needed by the secondary school in the Spring Term. We encourage parents to bring the appropriate reports to the secondary school.

- Principals and pupils (sometimes former pupils) of secondary schools in catchment area call to our school and speak with 6th class pupils. A pack from each school is sent home to parents.
- Parents attend an evening in the secondary school after enrolment.
- We will approach various aspects of Secondary School life and issues in our SPHE and RE programme.
- Some local secondary schools invite the children to their school for a day to give them an insight into secondary school life.

30. CUSTODY/SEPARATION POLICY

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Clondra can facilitate parents experiencing separations who wish to come and speak confidentially to the teachers and/or principal regarding their schoolgoing child/children's welfare. It is our aim to handle such matters with sensitivity and compassion, and ultimately our primary concern is for the wellbeing and overall development of the child.

1. When a child spends time in two homes, it is requested that the school be provided with both sets of emergency/contact numbers.
2. It is school policy to offer the option of separate parent/teacher meetings, if so desired.
3. It is assumed that when we wish to communicate with parents regarding their child, the parent who is contacted (i.e., the parent with whom the child principally resides) will inform the other parent of meetings, arrangements etc.
4. Special requests for separate communication can be accommodated.
5. Regarding notes, school communication via schoolbags, school reports etc, it is assumed that the parent with whom the child principally resides will keep the other parent informed.
6. In the absence of a custody arrangement, both parents will be treated as equal partners in terms of parenting rights and responsibilities.
7. The school cannot be asked to withhold a child from either parent, in the absence of a custody arrangement.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

All pupils are expected to participate in all activities during school hours – e.g., football coaching, basketball, etc., unless a note from the parent with an acceptable reason has been presented to the teacher

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| School Tour | We have a school tour every second year. Pupils from 1st Class to 6 th Class are allowed to go with parents' permission. |
| Concerts | Each Christmas the children have a school concert prepared by teachers in each classroom. Proceeds go towards resources for the school. |
| Santa Visit/Christmas | Santa visits the school each year and comes to our Christmas grotto where the children/families meet with him, |
| Swimming | In the summer term pupils from 1st-3rd-6th class go to swimming lessons with parents' permission. A bus brings the children to and from the pool. When organising the aquatics strand of our PE policy, the school is unable to meet the running costs. Due to the costs involved the Board of Management charges for the lessons and the bus to bring them to the pool. The price of the bus is negotiated every year with the companies involved with a view to getting the best price possible for parents. The amount charged to parents is dependent on the agreed price for pool and bus and the number of children attending lessons. Every effort is made to keep the costs down and lessons usually work out cheaper than swimming lessons outside of school hours. For the past few years, the Parents' Association have subsidised the cost of swimming. |
| Green Schools Programme | This is an environmental educational programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment. We received our first Green Flag for Litter & Waste in June 2013, our 2nd flag for Energy in 2015. We received our 3 rd flag for Water Awareness in 2017. We are now working towards our 4 th Green Flag for Travel (encouraging pupils to walk, cycle, car pool, etc). The Green Schools officer also offers workshops including scooter and bike training and on environmental themes. |
| Amber Flag | The Amber Flag promotes mental health and wellbeing and we renew this every two years. |
| Active Flag | The Active Flag promotes physical activity and health and we renew this every two years. |
| An Taisce | Clean up week, planting trees |
| Heritage for schools scheme | This scheme offer workshops in curricular areas with a heritage expert. |
| Longford County Council | They provided us with environmental in-school workshops e.g: Magic recycling. Representative from Longford County Council helps and advises with our Green School Flag application. |
| Food Dudes | This is a healthy eating and education programme. It is designed to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables both at school and at home, offered approximately every two years.. Following the implementation of this programme we continuing to encourage a healthy eating policy. |
| INTO Handwriting Competition | This competition celebrates handwriting and recognises the handwriting talents in our school. We have had a number of local winners, particularly |

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| | SEN children. |
| Theatre | Midlands Theatre company visit and put on a performance in the school every second year- |
| Longford Sports Partnership | We have taken part in a number of initiatives promoted and funded by the Sports Partnership: Tag Rugby – in-school coaching. Buntús - a comprehensive physical activity programme to support teachers in introducing children to sports and promoting physical activity. P.E. resources were provided for the school as part of this initiative. Kayaking session for 6 th class |
| Agri-Aware | Farm safety art competiton. |
| National Dairy Council | Moo Crew project for National Dairy Week |
| Longford GAA Programmes | Cumann na mBunscol competitions in Gaelic, Hurling/Camogie. School Sports Team: A mixed team usually selected from 4 rd -6 th classes (sometimes lower classes are included if our school numbers are low) takes part in the Cumann na mBunscol activities. Some of these activities are divided into mixed teams and some are boy/girl teams only. We also take part in FAI activities. Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate. Parents or past pupils volunteer to train the team for the year. Our school also takes part in an indoor hurling tournament organised by Longford GAA each year. Annual Gaelic/Hurling Blitzes Gaelic Football coaching for all class levels. Indoor hurling/camogie for 3 rd to 6 th participation. |
| Community Games | Children are encouraged to get involved in local Community Games- handwriting, art, draughts, soccer, Gaelic etc. |
| Texaco art competition | Annually |
| Aisling Arts festival | Art competitions, theatre visits, in-school theatre workshops |
| Credit Union | Quiz and Art competition |
| HSE | Paramedics visit and tour of the ambulance |
| Gardaí | Garda Fun Day every summer, they visit regularly to discuss safety, including at Halloween |
| Fire Services | Regular visits to discuss fire safety in the home including participation in a Fire Services initiative. |
| Road Safety Authority | Safe Cross Code, Seatbelt Sherriff, this initiative provides the children with Hi-Vis vests for walking and cycling to school. |
| Waterways Ireland | They run Art Competitions from time to time. |
| FAI | Competitions |
| Leinster Rugby Youth Programme | A coach comes to the school to train children (1 st -6 th) in tag rugby for a 6-8 week block each year and organises competitions. |
| Charities Supported | Goal Jersey Day; Trick or Treat for National Children’s Health Foundation, Trócaire’s Lentan Campaign, Other charities on an occasional basis. Our Junior Entrepreneurs usually make a donation to a charity of their choice. |
| Sports For All Day | Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, hosts a fun ‘sport for all’ day each year. The emphasis is on participation in and enjoyment of physical activity and is essentially non-competitive. The children take part in a wide variety of events. Sport for all Day is in line with the ethos of our school and the revised Primary School Curriculum which promotes physical activity for all and encourages children to perform to the best of their own individual |

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| | ability. A goodie bag is given to each child at the end of the day. |
| Backstage Theatre | From time to time the school attends relevant production in the Backstage Theatre in Longford, again with parents' permission. Bus transport is used. |
| Scór na bPáistí | We participate in these competitions if interest is expressed by the parents/children following a text home. We have had success in the past in solo dancing and have participated also in quiz, solo singing, music etc. |
| School choir | We prepare a school choir for various school masses and events. |
| Preparation for sacraments | All pupils who wish to receive the sacraments are prepared for these in our school. |
| Junior Entrepreneur Programme | Fifth and Sixth class usually take part in this programme every second year. |
| Hallowe'en | We have an annual Fancy Dress Party in aid of National Children's Health Foundation or other nominated charity.. |
| PA Activities | The Parents' Association have, for the past several years, organised a competition for the children with prizes for each class at Hallowe'en. They organise Easter eggs and a visit from the Easter bunny. They contribute to our Christmas activities and provide selection boxes when Santa visits. |
| Occasional Activities | We engage with these programmes when they become available: Cycle Aware Tri Heroes Programme Yes to Languages Sports Hall Athletics |

STAFF PROCEDURES

TEACHER ABSENCES

For brief absences it is up to the individual teacher involved to notify the principal

For long term illness/absence it is up to the individual teacher also to contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the School Inspector.

Absences/Leave are in accordance with the Department of Education and Science guidelines. If a teacher is going to be absent they should inform the Principal as soon as possible so that a Substitute Teacher can be arranged if DES allows. As the DES do not cover payment of substitute teacher for Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) days the Board of Management has ratified payment of a substitute teacher.

Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) days

Where possible a teacher will be facilitated and allowed EPV days as requested. In the event that two teachers request the same day off the final decision rests with the Principal.

Yard Duty and Supervision

During break times children are supervised at all times, responsibility being shared by the teachers. A rota is drawn up at the start of the school year. Some supervision duties are part of the extra duties for the post of responsibility holder in our school.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

Teacher's Planning Notes/work to be allocated will be made available where possible. It will be emphasised that school's policy must be adhered to regarding supervision of pupils/reporting of incidents, etc.

The Substitute Teacher will be given a folder containing relevant policies and school and pupil information. New substitute teachers will be asked for a copy of their Garda Vetting form and to sign a Statutory Declaration and Form of Indemnity.

Student Teachers will be welcomed. Student teachers will be asked for a copy of their Garda Vetting form and to sign a Statutory Declaration and Form of Indemnity. Every encouragement will be offered to them.

INDUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Before the new teacher commences work in the school, the Principal will give him/her a tour of the school where they will have an opportunity to visit their classroom. New members of staff will be given a copy of the General School Policy, with the main elements being explained on two half days, which includes organisational/curricular policies. Particular emphasis will be placed on Child Protection, Health and Safety, Code of Discipline, General School Policy, etc. The onus is on new members of staff to read this.

Existing members of staff are there to help. Updated circulars/guidelines will be circulated to all members of staff as they arrive in the school. The Principal will also give the new teacher:

- A folder of containing General School Policy, Staff Practices and Procedures, School Activities, and all other school policies. All staff will receive a Child Protection Folder in line with our Child Protection Policy
- Yard duty rota
- Set up a meeting with former class teacher (if possible)
- Show the new teacher where resources are kept, staff, toilets, etc.
- Outline the procedure for going home.
- Lunch time and break: eating time, sick children and yard duty.
- Time school starts and finishes – breaks.
- Access to the Aladdin School Management System.
- Buying items for school, e.g. putting items on account or keeping receipts, petty cash.
- Brief review of equipment to ensure that teacher is familiar with how to use all equipment, etc.

The principal will make the new teacher aware of what is expected of them with regard to:

- Weekly scheme (if not probated), otherwise fortnightly scheme.
- Yearly plan of work
- Monthly Progress Record
- Set up computer user rota
- Testing, monitoring, arranging timetable with Learning Support Teacher .

First Day

- The new teacher is introduced to and warmly welcomed by all the staff.
- The new teacher is then brought to their class to be introduced to pupils and any parents around, particularly if it is the first school day in September.
- A printout of their class information (names, phone numbers, medical issues, etc.), is provided.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Our Treasurer is Nuala Reynolds. Signatories on the school account are Mary Duignan, Nuala Reynolds and Melissa Hussey.

Our school account is held in the Bank of Ireland, Longford. It is used for all bills. We also hold PAYE/PRSI for our cleaner in this account and this is collected by Revenue by Direct Debit at regular intervals.

All financial matters are conducted in line with our Electric Banking Policy and Petty Cash Policy.

Monthly Bank Reconciliations and Income and Expenditure, Electronic Financial Transaction receipts and lodgement receipts are presented at each Board of Management meeting for examination. Any questions raised are answered and these photocopies/receipts are signed by two Board members. Our Treasurer uses the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) monthly reporting template to compile financial reports for the Board, budgets and annual reports. A report on the financial state of our school is given at each Board of Management Meeting.

Our monthly reporting template and all receipts/invoices are given to our accountants at the end of the school year. Our accounts are audited annually and a copy is lodged with the FSSU. Letter sent to the diocesan office stating that annual accounts have been submitted.

RATIFICATION

This policy was ratified on _____

Signed: _____

Mrs Mary Duignan, Chairperson, Board of Management, Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, Co Longford